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VOLCANOS AND MASS EXTINCTION

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EMBARGO ON EMBROIDERY

FEASTING ON SALMON

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the magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum

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Memisabu and His Wife. Painted limestone, (c. 2360 BC), height 62 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1948. Men in ancient Egypt loved their wives with all their heart. To learn what motivated them turn to page 12.
PHOTOGRAPH BY SCHECTER LEE
© 1986 THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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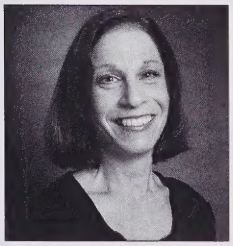
Editor's Note



The couple on the cover expresses the high esteem that husbands in ancient Egypt were supposed to feel for their wives. *Rotunda* articles usually cover life in ancient Egypt from an archaeological perspective, which focuses on the art, natural specimens, and architecture of a site. However, Ron Leprohon, an Egyptologist at the University of Toronto and ROM research associate, prefers to focus on the writing on the wall (or papyrus as the case may be).

In his article, Ron recounts some of the popular stories that instilled in Egyptians a belief in the importance of a stable family life. Their message shows the strong and continuous human behaviour and beliefs that bind our civilizations in spite of the distance of time.

Just when you think you've got a handle on mass extinction, some new evidence comes along to complicate things. As *Rotunda* readers surely know, it is now thought that the collision of a huge asteroid with Earth, some 65 million years ago, created the unfavourable environmental conditions that led to the demise of the dinosaurs and much other life on the planet. However, there have been five mass extinctions, not just the one that killed the dinos. What caused the other four? Scientific research is pointing to extreme volcanic activity, continuous for as long as a million years, as the possible trigger to such large-scale destruction. Sandra Kamo, lab manager in the Department of Earth Sciences, ROM, presents the scientific evidence that is pointing to extreme volcanism and explains why Mount Saint Helen's was nothing more than a pop.

Mix international political issues with trade and more often than not the result is a trade embargo. Think of the American ban on Cuban goods or the former multinational ban on South African products to protest apartheid. And trade embargos are not new. For example, the hostilities between England and France in the 18th century led the British Parliament to pass an act against the importation of foreign embroidered goods. Edward Maeder, a textile historian, has researched 100 articles of 18th-century "English" embroidered men's wear in the ROM's collections as part of his research to determine how goods could be classified as foreign. His article recreates the social climate of England at the time the law was passed, and the nationalist fervour that it stirred. But then, as now, the definition of foreign is vague when the fabric for a garment may have originated in one country, the embroidery threads in another, and the actual assembly in yet another.

Piers Anthony Weymouth Wedgwood is a direct descendant of Josiah Wedgwood, founder of the world renowned English porcelain company. Lord Wedgwood, an enthusiastic and very knowledgable spokesman for the company, gives readers not only some history but a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the company as well. You may be as astonished as I was to discover how much hand craftsmanship is still involved, in addition to the sophisticated modern technology.

Finally, I would like to note the passing of Peter Swann, director of the ROM from 1966 to 1972. Swann created *Rotunda* and served as its first editor. I hope you find this issue as fresh and enjoyable as the first one, published thirty years ago.

Sandra Shaul

Sandra Shaul

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This mazer bowl, of turned maple, garnished with a silver rim and an ornamental silver boss, was used as a communal drinking vessel in England during the Middle Ages.

A Rare Mazer Bowl Acquired by the ROM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

THE FINAL LOT IN A SILVER AUCTION is usually presented as the *pièce de résistance.* The rare mazer bowl catalogued for the Sotheby's New York sale of 16 April 1996 certainly fitted that description. Some quick research on my part revealed that the bowl had been consigned to Sotheby's by Canadians who had neglected to apply for the necessary Export Permit. Such a permit is required for the sale outside Canada of all rare and valuable items that have been in the country for more than 35 years.

When the Royal Ontario Museum informed Sotheby's of the oversight, the bowl was withdrawn from sale and brought to Toronto. Because of the bowl's importance, the export permit was denied and the ROM was able to negotiate its purchase through Sotheby's.

Mazer bowls are turned maple, usually made from a bole, which is a lump or growth on a tree trunk or a branch that has a particularly intricate grain. These shallow bowls were typically used as communal drinking vessels during the Middle Ages. Often the lip of the bowl was

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garnished with a wide silver rim, and an ornamental silver boss in the centre could bear a heraldic or symbolic device of the owner.

In medieval England, mazer bowls were found in the homes of the upper middle class and nobility, religious orders, guilds, colleges, and even the dining rooms of alms houses. A survey published in London by the Society of Antiquaries in 1881 discovered that fewer than 80 such bowls were known to survive in private and institutional collections. Since that publication, the number of known examples has grown to slightly more than 80. These bowls constitute a significant part of the fewer than 300 pieces of medieval and earlier (pre-1520) English silver estimated to exist by Philippa Glanville, keeper of the National Silver Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The bowl now owned by the ROM has cyphers for Jesus and Mary engraved inside the gilded silver rim, and is similar to several examples, also unmarked, recorded in the 1881 census. It is the only mazer bowl in Canada and as such is a significant addition to the ROM's important collection of European silver.

Half the purchase price for the bowl was received as a grant approved by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. The other half came from the ROM Reproduction Fund of the ROM Foundation; the bequest of William Theron Pinkerton in memory of his mother, Tilly Kate Pinkerton; and income from the Count Walter Bieniewski Fund for European Acquisitions in the ROM Foundation. The Royal Ontario Museum is grateful that these funds were made available for probably the unique opportunity of acquiring this rare object.

PETER KAELLGREN
Peter Kaellgren is a curator in the Department of Western Art and Culture, Royal Ontario Museum

Two coho salmon caught by the author, who is now hooked on this delicious fish.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL CLEMENS

Salmon

REMEMBER THE SALMON WARS OF last summer? Commercial fishermen from British Columbia squared off with local Native groups. The Alaskan fleet tried to take it all. Canadian fishermen practically dispatched an armada to discipline the Alaskan salmon rustlers. British Columbian politicians scuffled with Washington, DC over salmon. They wrestled with Ottawa over salmon. Ottawa hemmed and hawed to Washington. The rest of us, on smart days, ate salmon.

Although they were squabbling over something worthwhile for once, that summer was no more than a blip in the long history of the princely fish. The Romans, who conquered many a place, may have had no salmon in the Mediterranean, but that didn't stop them from hauling live salmon, in lead-lined cistern carts, across Gaul and down the Loire or Rhine into Italy. The intrepid Marco Polo noticed salmon in Lake Baku, Azerbaydzhan. Victor Hugo neglected to mention it in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* but the Seine of the Middle Ages ran thickly with the prized fish. The Thames, too. And the Rhine was the richest salmon river in Europe until it was transformed into a watery ribbon of filth.

Although it is a beautiful fish, an *incomparable* fish with its tangerine-hued flesh and buttery consistency, salmon has been too abundant to be fashionable. Charles Dickens equated the eating of salmon with poverty. It sustained downtrodden Celts in Scotland and Ireland. Indentured servants in Britain's American colonies were so incensed by the omnipresence of salmon, their contracts actually stipulated they endure it no more than once a week.

While wealthy Europeans and English peons in the Americas dodged salmon Hell, the Native Peoples of the Pacific Northwest were gorging themselves happily on different "tribes" of salmon: chinook, coho, sockeye, chum, spring. They conducted prayers and dances for the regularity of the great salmon runs—as many as seven a year. They revered salmon, considering them benevolent spirits who arrived from the sea to feed the chosen. According to lore, they possessed 66 different recipes for preparing and preserving salmon, the jerky-like "squaw's candy" among them.

In those days, the abundance of spawning salmon was fabulous. Early traders claimed they could ford a

river on their backs. At one point, the boats of explorers Lewis and Clark had to force a passage through the mass of fish. British Columbia's Salmon Arm was so named because the run was so dense, the locals could pitchfork them out of the river, afflicting themselves with a "salmon arm" much like tennis elbow.

Today the fish occupies an elite position on the tables of a small handful of lucky nations: Norway, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Japan, and lately, Australia, where Atlantic salmon is being farmed in the chilly waters of Tasmania. The Norwegians marinate it and smoke it quite wonderfully, but you don't want them cooking it. The Scots and Irish are rightly renowned for their smoked salmon. The Japanese catch *masu*, a bland and homely species, off northernmost Hokkaido, where I was once honoured with a platter of eyeballs and, when I declined, was served a stew of brain cage and genitals. And we Canadians? Quick, while there is still time, let us beat the Norwegians and Irish and designate salmon as our national dish.

We are the country which, in spite of devastating pollution and mindless overfishing, comes rich with salmon on both Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and in our rivers and lakes too. Most of it is farmed, a triumph of aquaculture. Atlantic, with its richly marbled flesh, is considered the best in the world, and I'm not arguing. Pacific species tend to be considerably leaner, less unctuous, slighter in flavour, and less forgiving if you overcook them even by seconds. The chinook or king salmon, which spends eight years in the ocean and can attain a size of more than 100 pounds, is unquestionably the Pacific's finest, with the red, fleshy sockeye as a fairly close second. The insipid chum—Natives call it "dog salmon" because it is thrown to the pooches—falls at the bottom of the list, but has a secret virtue: its roe is the best of salmon caviars, each tiny egg an explosion of pleasure on the palate.

I wasn't fussy last summer, when I fished off Tofino on the west coast of Vancouver Island. I'd never had any luck with fishing, never caught anything larger than the bait. I reeled in two coho salmon, a shade less than seven pounds apiece. A senior next to me, who'd just hooked a 13-pounder, shot me a pitying glance. But for me, it was a *ménage à trois*. The chef at the Wickaninnish Inn dressed one in a crust of herbs, grilled it perfectly rare, and served it for breakfast. The fish had been caught, the fisherman hooked.

I love salmon. I love how we Canadians can bring to it all the accents and excitements of the global village kitchen. Other men wake up dreaming of Uma Thurman or Gwyneth Paltrow or Julia Roberts. Me, I wake up dreaming of salmon.

Every Saturday morning, I show up at Mike's in the St. Lawrence Market and ask manager George Koyionis for a juicy centre-cut of Atlantic, at least one-and-a-half inches thick, maybe one pound, maybe five. Possibly my wife will chop it coarsely, drizzle it with hazelnut oil, and serve it as a tartare. Or she'll marinate it for several days, slice it thinly, and fan it out with dollops of B.C. chum caviar as a garnish. Maybe I'll spread it with a crust of Indian spices or Japanese *miso*, slap it on the barbecue, and grill it rare. Maybe she'll wrap fat slabs in flaky sheets of phyllo pastry and roast them just-so. Maybe there is a heaven. Maybe you can get there without being dead.

Here are two of my wife Carol Clemens's favourite recipes.

MARINATED SALMON FILLET WITH FRESH SALMON CAVIAR

Embarrassingly easy to prepare, this is an appetizer that builds reputations. The salmon is firm, juicy, and flavourful, and the roe pops on the palate.

Ingredients

- 2 675 g (1½ lb) pieces centrecut salmon fillet at least 3.8 cm (1½ inches) thick, skin on
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) brown sugar
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) coarse pickling salt
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) cracked pepper
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) dried parsley or a mixture of parsley and dill
- salmon caviar and capers for garnish

Method

Using a pair of tweezers, remove any bones remaining in the salmon fillets. Rinse salmon fillets and pat dry. Fit one fillet, skin side down, into a rectangular dish, just large enough to hold it. Sprinkle the remaining ingredients, except caviar and capers, over the fillet. Fit the remaining fillet over the first, skin side up, and thick side against the bottom fillet's thin side.

Cover the fillets tightly with plastic wrap. Weigh down the fish with at least a kilo (two-pound) weight (we use tinned vegetables). Refrigerate for three to five days. Rotate fish daily. Marinated salmon is ready in three days, better at five days, and good for two weeks if kept well sealed in the coldest part of the refrigerator.

To serve, slice the salmon thinly and fan out on plate. Garnish with capers and salmon caviar.

Serves 12–15 as an appetizer

SALMON ROASTED IN PHYLLO PASTRY

The crackle of crisp, paper-thin phyllo pastry contrasts exquisitely with the yielding, voluptuous flesh of the salmon. Oohs and aahs from dinner guests are the order of the evening.

Ingredients

- 4 centre-cut skinned salmon fillets about 250 g (8 oz.) each
- 125 ml (½ cup) finely minced fresh coriander
- 60 ml (¼ cup) melted butter
- 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil
- 9 sheets phyllo pastry (preferably fresh)
- 4 sprigs of coriander

Method

Preheat oven to 220° C (425° F). Using a pair of tweezers, remove any bones from the salmon fillets. Rinse fillets and pat dry. Roll fillets in minced fresh coriander until lightly coated.

Combine the melted butter and olive oil. Spread one sheet of phyllo on a clean dry work area and brush lightly with butter mixture. Place another piece of phyllo on top and brush again with the butter mixture. (Cover remaining phyllo sheets with a clean tea towel to protect them from drying out.)

Lay one of the salmon fillets in the middle of one end of the layered phyllo. Fold the sides to overlap the salmon and then roll the salmon gently to form a rectangular phyllo packet. Place the packet on an ungreased cookie sheet. Repeat with the remaining salmon and phyllo.

Cut the one remaining piece of phyllo into 4 strips. Brush lightly with the butter mixture. Place one sprig of coriander, cut to size, on the top of each salmon packet. Wrap the phyllo strip around the salmon packet. Trim the strip to ensure that the coriander is covered with only one layer of phyllo. The coriander should show through the phyllo, creating a pleasing design.

Bake the phyllo in a preheated 220° C (425° F) oven for 10 minutes for medium rare salmon or 12 minutes for medium. The phyllo should be lightly golden-brown and perfectly crisp.

Serves four.

ROASTED SALMON SKIN

The skin from marinated salmon is a surprising delicacy when roasted.

Ingredients

- skin from marinated salmon fillet
- vegetable oil cooking spray
- flavourful sea salt

Method

Rinse the salmon skin. Pat dry, making sure any remaining scales have been wiped off. Spray a cookie sheet with the cooking spray. Place the skin on the pan perfectly flat, outer side down. Roast for 10 minutes at 160° C (350° F) or until skin, still pliable, begins to crisp at the edges. Sprinkle with salt and serve immediately.

JEREMY FERGUSON

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Marauding Mice

A FEW MONTHS AGO MY APARTMENT was invaded. It started with the sighting of something brown moving rapidly across my blue-striped runners. A rodent? A rolled-up fall leaf? The thing disappeared before it could be determined. Suspecting mice, I put a piece of cheddar on the kitchen floor that night. It was gone the next morning. No longer did I feel comfortable in my quaint little abode. The fear that dozens of critters were sprinting with ease across my hardwood floor made coming home an itchy, creepy experience. I had to take control.

The corner convenience store was the next stop—"Six mouse traps please." These were special traps; they had plastic bait which looked and smelled like cheese to lure my game. And the little darlings loved it. Every day I came home to one, sometimes two, dead in the traps. A mere $1.99 per pair was all it cost for these miraculous, reassuring snapping devices. Unfortunately, they weren't working—the mice kept coming. It was time for integrated pest management (IPM), a hands-on method for environmentally friendly pest removal. Step one: research the pest.

House mice (*Mus domesticus*) are a possible risk to home or office. According to Hillary Klein and Adrian Wenner's *Tiny Game Hunting*, mice chew through electrical wires causing many unexplained fires. They are compulsive chewers—a survival skill to eat or gain access to food or housing.

These little animals, whose role now ranges from pest to pet to Mickey, originated in Asia. Since then, they have spread throughout the world. There are many reasons for their ability to survive in different climates. House mice will eat almost anything and are superb food robbers who in cold climates will scurry indoors every fall for the winter. They also reproduce rapidly. At six weeks old mice are fertile and after only a 21-day gestation period they can produce litters that range in number from eight to 13.

Knowing just a few facts about house mice is enough to make you not want them around. Don't worry, step two is to go on the make-life-difficult-for-the mice program. Just put on your hunting hat and follow instructions. First, place flour on the floor near the baseboards to track their paw prints. Once you know where they are coming from, block off all possible openings. Although a mouse can get through very small spaces, it is still a good idea to fill obvious holes with non-chewable steel wool or hardware cloth advises Dr. Judith Eger, a curator in the Mammology Section of the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation

ILLUSTRATION BY CLIVE DOBSON

Biology (CBCB) at the Royal Ontario Museum. Second, do a thorough cleaning. Put food in plastic containers or in the fridge—a cardboard box is easily broken into. Once everything is sealed and clean, head off to the hardware store for more tools.

Be careful, don't waste your money—there are lots to choose from. You can find poison, for example, or Have-a-Heart traps which catch the animals alive. Sticky glue boards will stop the mice in their tracks. There are also old-fashioned snap traps, and ultrasonic high-pitched deterrents that only mice can hear. For a so-called quick, keep-your-hands-clean fix, poison might seem attractive. Most pest control companies place bait stations that contain warfarin, an anticoagulant, throughout the house or apartment. When the warfarin is ingested, the mouse bleeds to death. This same poison, in a lesser potency, can be bought at a hardware store. The problem is that poison can be dangerous for small children and pets.

Another problem with poison is that despite the common claim that the animal will travel back to its nest to die, this isn't always the case. If asked, most pesticide companies will warn their client that one or two dead mice could die secretly in the home. For the squeamish, this is a morbid concern. And, although the rodents are supposed to disintegrate odourless, a representative at Rentokil said there might be a foul odour for a couple of days. Even worse, IPM exterminator Bill Reeves said in an interview in the *Sacramento Bee*, "I have known people who have torn out walls to find the horrible stench which can take three to six weeks to dissipate."

For the above reasons, scientists in the Mammalogy Section of CBCB recommend alternatives to poison. Over lunch in the mammalogy library they gave their suggestions. Dr. Eger looks above her reading glasses to say that the most humane tactic is the snap trap because it hits the mouse's neck strategically and kills instantly. Also, use the right size trap. If you use a rat trap for a mouse, says Dr. Eger, you will only catch part of the mouse without killing it and that is cruel. For the most successful bait, Dr. Patricia Ross, department associate, recommends oatmeal, peanut butter, vanilla, or bacon.

When asked about the catch-and-release traps, Dr. Eger says that, unfortunately, people sometimes use the Have-a-Heart traps but forget to check them and the animals starve to death. Furthermore, both scientists agree that if you free a trapped mouse outside it probably won't survive, because it has been displaced from its food source and will need to find another home, which is not easy to do. The experts also don't recommend glue boards. According to Dr. Eger, when the pest is stuck in the glue on the board, it can bite off its paws in its attempt to free itself. As for the ultrasonic traps, both scientists say there is proof that they do not work.

Once you have followed these steps and advice you are on your way to being mouse-free. Be patient. It takes time, determination, and effort to get rid of these little pests and there are no simple solutions. Also, be careful. Poison obviously comes with its own set of problems and some trapping devices are just not nice to mice. Remember, mice are fellow mammals and have feelings too.

By using plastic cheese traps, sanitation, and hole plugging, I got rid of my little critters in about two weeks. Going from discovery to research to trapping to regaining control of my home was rewarding. It was simple: conditions weren't comfortable, so the mice packed up and went apartment hunting. They are never missed but their traps are still out for fear of their return. For now, I am the lone mammal in my quaint little abode. And I like it. So, until next fall, happy critter-free living.

LEIGH FELESKY
Leigh Felesky is a freelance writer living in Toronto

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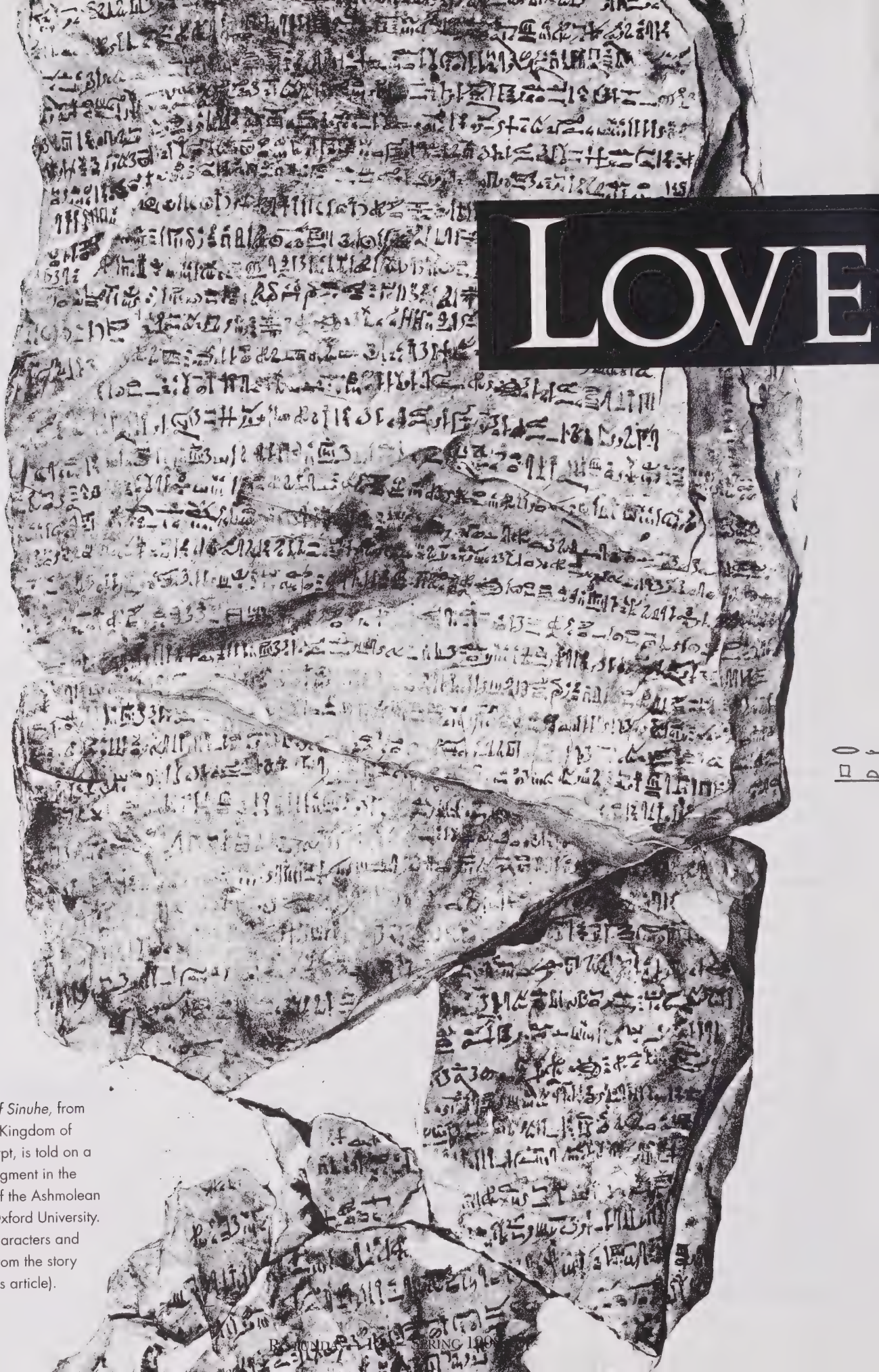
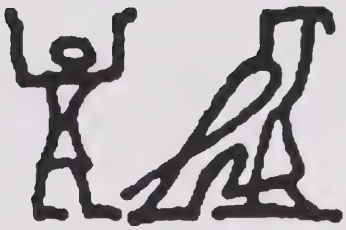
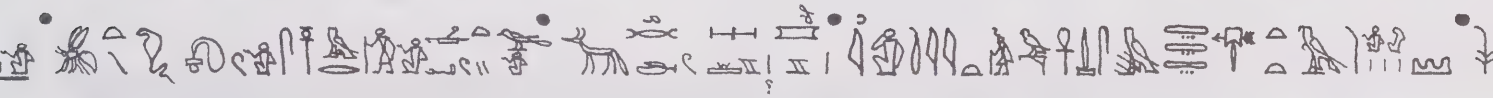


LOVE

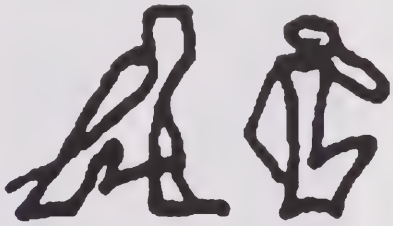
The Story of Sinuhe, from the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt, is told on a papyrus fragment in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University. (Hieratic characters and passages from the story illustrate this article).



Ancient literature YOUR WIFE *about family life* WITH ALL *sounds a familiar* YOUR HEART *note today*



RONALD J. LEPROHON



If you are brave and control your heart,
you shall embrace your children,
kiss your wife,
and see your home again.

WITH THESE WORDS A MAGIC 15-METRE SERPENT assures a marooned sailor that all will end well. This passage is from *The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor.* Dating from Egypt's Middle Kingdom (20th to 17th century BCE), the story describes how the sailor survives a shipwreck and is saved by the talking serpent. When the serpent exhorts the sailor to keep faith, he recounts the tragic end of his own family—his brothers and sisters and their children. In the ancient Egyptian imagination even magical beings were meant to have families, because the family was the basic social structure. Folk tales, myths, and instructional literature from ancient Egypt often emphasize the importance of family.

The Story of Sinuhe, also from the Middle Kingdom, is full of exciting adventures couched within timeless literary themes. It ends happily with the hero's safe return to Egypt under the favour of the royal family. While Sinuhe is in Western Asia in self-imposed exile, a chieftain offers him his daughter in marriage, and she and Sinuhe raise children who grow up to adulthood. In other words, Sinuhe leaves home a disgraced coward but

Ronald J. Leprohon is a professor of Egyptology at the University of Toronto and a ROM research associate

through his travels accomplishes many things, part of which includes marrying and having children. The audience for which this story was created would have viewed those acts as signs of maturity.

In one other tale from this period, *The Story of the Eloquent Peasant,* an itinerant merchant's wares are stolen while he is on a business trip, and it requires very long-winded efforts in court to reclaim his goods. As the story begins, the merchant's wife helps him pack for the trip, which adds a nice touch of domesticity. While talking to his wife, the merchant assures her that she and the children will have enough food while he is gone. Later, the authorities supply his wife and children with food rations while the peasant is detained in court. Once again, the realities of having a family, with its attendant responsibilities, are stressed in the story.

The theme of the importance of the family is still pursued in a number of tales from the New Kingdom (16th to 11th century BCE). In the story of *The Predestined Prince,* a childless king requests a son from the gods, and one is eventually born to him. Right away the appropriate situation—a ruler with a wife and an heir—is established. However, three perilous fates are prophesied for the prince, who ends up leaving Egypt to escape his destiny. While in Western Asia, he encounters a king's daughter whose hand must be won by jumping up to her window. After succeeding in this and after many adventures he seems to live happily ever after—the ending of the story is now lost. The marriage of the prince and the princess is presented as a desired conclusion.

Another genre of writing also offers views on the subject of marriage and family life. The so-called Instructional Literature, sometimes referred to as Wisdom Literature, consists of homilies written in short phrases, usually arranged in couplets. The Instructions often involve a father teaching his son about the ways of the world: how to behave in the world at large, what to look out for, what to avoid, how important it is to have good table manners, and so on. Although these teachings were written for the benefit of the aristocracy, they did contain a blueprint for the perfect Everyman as envisioned by the ancient Egyptians.

As they were written in the form of short, easily remembered phrases and couplets, it is quite possible that they were memorized by a great number of people, including the less fortunate within ancient Egyptian society. In fact, one occasionally sees almost the exact phrase repeated from one Instruction to another, sometimes written hundreds of years later, suggesting the enduring popularity of the form.

One passage from the Old Kingdom, *Instructions of the Sage Hordedef,* dated to about the 23rd century BCE, encapsulates everything the ancient Egyptians felt about a happy marriage:

If you are an excellent one,
you should establish your household.
Marry a woman, mistress of her heart,
and a son will be born to you.
It is for the son that you build a house.

COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Copies of wall paintings on this and the facing page show the importance of family life in ancient Egypt. Here, in a painted scene from the Tomb of Ipuy, Ipuy and his wife receive offerings from their children. Egyptian Expedition of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1930.

The first thing to note is the word "excellent" in the first line. Since the ancient Egyptian word can also be rendered as "wealthy" in some contexts, perhaps the meaning of the passage is "Once you can afford it, you should establish your household." Other passages from the Instructional Literature indicate that the ancient Egyptians placed a lot of importance on being able to take proper care of their families, and so such a phrase would have been meaningful to them. The expression about the woman being "mistress of her heart" meant that the woman should be level-headed and able to maintain her temper, social virtues very much prized by the aristocracy. The last item stressed in the passage is that the whole point of marriage was to procreate. The specific wish for a son is noteworthy. Usually a male heir was desired, but occasionally the Instructional Literature spoke simply of children.

Some of these aspirations are repeated in a passage from the *Instructions of the Sage Ptahhotep*, from the Middle Kingdom:

If you are an excellent one,
you should establish your household,
and love your wife with all your heart.
Fill her belly and clothe her back,
for perfume is a prescription for her limbs.
Make her happy as long as you live,
for she is a fertile field for her lord.
You should not pass judgement on her,
but keep her away from power and restrain her,
for her eye can be a storm when she sees.
Soothe her heart with what has accrued to you;
thus will you make her stay in your house.

The first couplet is taken word for word from the *Instructions of Hordedef*, written hundreds of years earlier. The passage expands on the ancient Egyptians' views of a happy marriage. First, the man must take good care of his wife, making sure he provides her with the necessities to keep her happy. It also warns the husband against judging his wife too quickly, lest she berate and possibly even leave him. The line that describes the wife as "a fertile field for her lord" is a none-too-subtle reminder that a married woman was expected to produce children for her husband. Given the mostly agricultural environment of ancient Egypt, the image is not a surprising one.

The theme of honouring and appreciating one's wife was often stressed in the Instructional Literature. A passage from the *Instructions of the Sage Any* from the New Kingdom exhorts a man to treat his wife well:

Don't control your wife in her house
when you know she is efficient.
Don't say to her: "Where is it? Bring it over!"
when she's put it in the right place all along.
Let your eye observe [her] in silence,
and then you'll appreciate her skill.
It is joy when your hand is with her;
there are many who don't know this.
If a man abstains from strife at home,
he will not encounter its beginning.
Every man who founds a household

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Userhat, his wife, and mother are entertained in a garden by the goddess of the sycamore fig tree in this painted scene from the Tomb of Userhat (c. 1303-1290 BC). Egyptian Expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1930.

should hold back a hasty heart.

In the earlier *Instructions of Ptahhotep,* an interesting admonition offers mature counsel:

If you marry a fat woman,
who is joyful and also known in her town
[i.e., respectable],
If she possesses these two qualities,
and time with her is pleasant,
do not reject her, let her eat,
for a joyful person brings happiness.

A Late Period Instruction found in *Papyrus Insinger* (3rd century BCE) sums up the role of the wife nicely: "There is the woman who fills her house with wealth without there being an income/And there is also the woman who is praised as mistress of her house by virtue of her good character."

A darker side of marriage was also addressed by the ancient Egyptian authors. Marital infidelity appears in a good number of stories, hinting that the ancient Egyptian storytellers and moralists wished to teach an important lesson. In a story found in *Papyrus Westcar* (from the Middle Kingdom), the unfaithful wife of a magician is put to death for her infidelity. The tale showcases the magician's power but does not ignore the moral of the story. In the New Kingdom *Tale of the Two Brothers,* a wife tries unsuccessfully to seduce her husband's younger brother—reminiscent of the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis

39—and ends up being killed as punishment; another clear argument against adultery.

Infidelity is further addressed in the Instructional Literature, which contains admonitions against the crime of adultery. The Instructions were quite clear on this. In the Middle Kingdom *Instructions of Ptahhotep,* the sage warns:

If you wish friendship to endure in the house you enter,
whether as master, brother, or friend,
in fact, in whichever place you enter,
beware of approaching the women!
The place where this is done cannot be a happy one;
there can be no cleverness in revealing this fact.
A thousand men are turned away from what is
good for them.
It is but a short moment, like a dream,
and then death comes from having known it.

The same warning is repeated a few thousand years later in the Late Period by the sage Ankhsheshonqy: "He who makes love to a married woman/will be killed on her doorstep."

It is noteworthy, given what we know of actual legal cases where adultery was involved, that infidelity is punished by death in both the tales and the Instructions. In the real cases the unfaithful husband usually suffered financially while the unfaithful woman was divorced. The teachers in the Instructions might simply have been trying to warn young men to be especially careful. Perhaps crimes of passion were not uncommon in ancient Egypt. As Ankhsheshonqy warns: "Do not fraternize with a woman whose husband is [still] alive/since he will become your enemy."

A few passages in the Instructional Literature consider the woman's motives on the subject. In *Papyrus Insinger,* the sage asserts: "A good woman who does not love another man in her family is a wise woman/The women who follow this teaching are rarely bad." The New Kingdom *Instructions of Any* warns:

Beware of a woman who is a stranger,
one who is not known in her own town.
Don't stare at her as she follows her companions,
and do not know her carnally.
A woman away from her husband
is a deep water whose course is unknown.
"I am beautiful!" she tells you daily,
when she has no witnesses.
She stops and ensnares you,
a deadly crime when it is discovered.

This last passage is really more about the fear of strangers, as the passage that mentions the woman's being "not known in her own town" indicates. Compare the phrase quoted earlier from the *Instructions of Ptahhotep,* which spoke of the woman who was "known in her town." The passage does address the topic of marital fidelity, given that the woman is said to be "away from her husband." From these texts, it seems safe to say that the ancient Egyptians could be equal-opportunity philanderers.

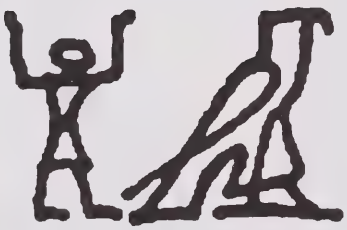
The whole gamut of human deeds, needs, and emotions is contained in these writings from ancient Egypt. The Instructions gave advice about every facet of family life, from preparing for marriage by choosing the right mate to staying happily married.

The tales include happy as well as dysfunctional families. Childless parents beseech the gods for children. A number of protagonists wish to get married and do so, some of them having had to compete for their spouse's hand. There are good husbands and foolish ones, faithful as well as unfaithful wives, and wicked stepmothers.

However, one of the things that always strikes me after looking carefully at ancient Egypt, and notwithstanding the thousands of years that separate our two civilizations, is how much we have in common. There is a strong and continuous bond of human behaviour and beliefs that has endured for thousands of years and will likely continue for thousands more. ✿

PHOTOGRAPH BY SCHECTER LEE © 1986 THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

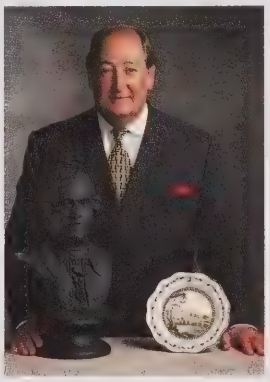
If you are
an excellent one /
you should establish
your household /
and love your wife
with all your heart /
Fill her belly and
clothe her back



Memisabu and His Wife. Painted limestone, (c. 2360 BC), height 62 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1948.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY JOSIAH WEDGWOOD & SONS LIMITED

Three Centuries of Collecting Wedgwood: An Evening with Lord Wedgwood *takes place on Wednesday 20 May at 6:30 pm in Eaton Court and Theatre ROM. For more information call (416)586-5797. This is a program related to the exhibition* A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



WEDGWOOD *on* WEDGWOOD

More than 200 years after Josiah Wedgwood launched his company, the family maintains a vital presence

PIERS ANTHONY WEYMOUTH WEDGWOOD

FEW NAMES CAN RIVAL WEDGWOOD IN THE WORLD OF CERAMICS. AS AN international business founded in 1759 by my forefather, Josiah Wedgwood I, known as the "Father of English Potters," the company today continues to uphold the three essential values he instilled: the highest standards in design, craftsmanship, and quality.

My relationship to Wedgwood is both personal and professional. As a descendant of the company's founder, I inherit its rich artistic and historical traditions. They are very much a part of my personal heritage. Indeed, I can recall looking through the early design books as a child. They precipitated my sense of what is beautiful. Professionally, I have

Piers Anthony Weymouth Wedgwood, Fourth Lord Wedgwood of Barlaston, is a direct descendant of Josiah Wedgwood, founder of the famous pottery, and Wedgwood International Ambassador

Eighteenth-century artist George Stubbs, best known for his sporting scenes, painted this portrait of the Wedgwood family (above). Stubbs also worked for Wedgwood. Preceding pages: A table set with Wedgwood Cornucopia pattern, a favourite of the present Lord Wedgwood and his wife, Jean. Lord Wedgwood poses with a bust of his famous ancestor, Josiah Wedgwood I. The family resemblance is uncanny.

rather a multi-faceted role within the organization. I spend a good part of the year travelling to different markets and helping to support sales efforts. This can mean in-store appearances and product signings, delivering presentations on the company history or that of the industry as a whole—or even the ritual of tea drinking!

My main interest is always in the customer and the collector, perhaps because, before all else, I am a customer and collector myself. The houses my wife Jean and I maintain in England, France, and the United States are reflections of my business. Our Philadelphia home contains examples of virtually every style made by Wedgwood since 1759. It may seem like clutter, but every piece has a special memory for us. Travelling as much as I do in my work, it's always a pleasure to return home and be surrounded by these familiar things.

I'm passionate about encouraging collectors and that's why I'm patron of a new society created exclusively for them [see sidebar].

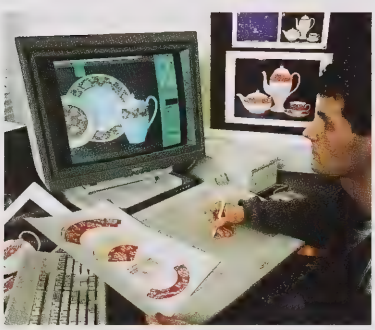
Wedgwood is not only an artistic product. Creative vision and commercial genius were both hallmarks of Josiah Wedgwood, and as we head towards the 21st century, it's gratifying to see how the enterprise he founded continues to look forward—innovating and setting trends to compete for its leading position in the world's market place.

Back in the 18th century Josiah was so confident of the quality of his ware that he offered the first recorded example of a money-back guarantee. Significantly, we have no record of anyone taking him up on the offer. That first guarantee preceded the introduction of Wedgwood fine bone china, which today takes pride of place in our company's product line. Our bone china contains 51 per cent calcined animal bone, which makes it extremely strong, white, and translucent. It is truly durable. Just to test it, the company recently balanced a 15.5-ton earth digger on eight china coffee cups, a world record.

Interestingly enough, bone china did not become a Wedgwood standard during Josiah I's lifetime. It fell to his son, Josiah II, to introduce the product in 1812 and the company has never looked back. The Cornucopia pattern is one of my personal favourites among our bone china patterns. It's both simple and intricate—a pattern of contrasts. Because it's so classic though, there's room for an element of wit too, with the little animals. Jean and I use it for dining at home. There's a clarity of design that goes into all Wedgwood tableware that makes it both sophisticated and simple.

We also have Persia tableware. A successful pattern launched this year, Persia is a good example of design taking colours relevant in current interior design and turning them into a classic tableware pattern. What I particularly like about Persia is the way in which it harks back to Rosso Antico, a red stoneware body first produced by Josiah I in 1764. I have long admired the "Procession of the Deities" vase, a Rosso Antico work dating from 1792 which, by coincidence, the company plans to reproduce in its original terracotta and black colour in 1998.

A page from the first Wedgwood pattern book, 1770 (right, top) and a tray of Jasper trials, 1774 (right, bottom).



Brian Bates, a master craftsman (top), is the third generation of his family at Wedgwood to use the traditional handpiercing technique to create a Queen's Ware Orange Bowl. A craftsman (middle) applies ornamentation to Wedgwood pieces. CADCAM computer technology (bottom) is used for Wedgwood design.

Persia illustrates one of Wedgwood's great strengths—its ability to recombine elements of a catalogue extending back over two centuries in ways that are absolutely up-to-the-minute in terms of current interior design trends.

Nantucket is our choice for more casual, informal gatherings. Inspired by the hand-woven baskets made on the island of Nantucket, in Massachusetts, the pattern is a superb example of the china body's versatility. Here the company's craftsmen have taken bone china and made it look like basketware, right down to the hasp and hinges on the teapot and other lidded pieces.

Noteworthy among the other patterns Jean and I have collected or inherited over the years are Turquoise Florentine and Black Colonnade. Both have quite a history. Turquoise Florentine was designed back in the 1880s by Thomas Allen, the Wedgwood art director, and since then has been produced in a wide variety of colours. The final version for fine bone china was produced in 1924 and illustrates the fine skill of hand-enamelling. Black Colonnade actually derived from a gold version produced with the White House crest for Theodore Roosevelt in 1902. The presidential aspect appeals to my sense of history.

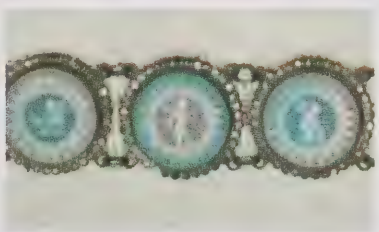
I also have a passion for strong, bold designs like Ruby Tonquin. Sadly, it's no longer available to order but you have to appreciate changing tastes, production feasibilities, and commercial viability in this industry to maintain competitiveness. We introduce new patterns every year and from what I've seen of the new collections for launch in 1998 there are undoubtedly some future classics in the making—I particularly like Frances, Samurai, and the wonderfully fresh, exciting Sarah's Garden range.

Tableware successes apart, I always find that most people around the world immediately recognize Wedgwood as "that blue and white stuff." Jasper ware is synonymous with the Wedgwood name the world over and still plays a significant part in our product portfolio. It embodies our heritage, reflects our tradition, and displays real craftsmanship, and next year several beautifully crafted reproduction 18th-century prestige pieces are due to be launched—something I'm definitely looking forward to. I'm also especially excited by the new Jasper colours such as spruce, which I hope will be in production for many years to come.

Perfected in 1774 after thousands of recorded experiments, Jasper ware is still the most famous of all Josiah Wedgwood's inventions. It was a triumphant outcome for him and provided the body for the famous Wedgwood Portland Vase, still our trademark on all fine bone china backstamps. Josiah considered this vase, a reproduction of the Barberini vase, to be his finest achievement. The original was cased glass thought to have originated at the hands of an Alexandrian craftsman in Rome and dating from the late first century BC. It was first catalogued in the collection of the Barberini family in 1642, and in 1780 it was purchased by James Byres, who subsequently sold it to Sir William Hamilton, the British Ambassador to Naples, who was a great friend of Josiah Wedgwood.

In due course, Hamilton brought the vase back to England, where it was acquired by the Duchess of Portland in 1784. After her death, it was auctioned and purchased by her son, the third Duke of Portland, who loaned it to Josiah to produce a faithful replica in Jasper ware. Such was the accuracy of the copy that when the glass original, on loan to the British Museum, was smashed in 1845, it was restored with the aid of the Wedgwood example.

Some of my preferred Jasper ware pieces were reproduced by our factory in 1991 as part of The Lord Wedgwood Collection. We chose items for the collection that employed manufacturing techniques that were pioneered by Josiah I and are still in evidence at the factory today. The Josiah Wedgwood Medallion, with its cameo portrait of the



A ceramic white-on-pale-blue Wedgwood portrait medallion of Queen Elizabeth II (top). A 15.2-cm- (6-inch-) high teapot, c. 1790, with the Empire form (middle). The pot is solid-grey-blue Jasper with applied ornament: Charlotte at the Tomb of Werther (pictured here) and Sportive Love, designed by Lady Templetown and modelled by William Hackwood in 1785. The lid and foot were engine-turned; the flute of the spout and handle terminate in acanthus-leaf mouldings. A detail of 18th-century Jasper jewellery (bottom).

founder, was a natural for the collection. Josiah I noted at Jasper's inception that it was "particularly fit for cameos, portraits, and all subjects in bas-relief." Jasper and Wedgwood cameos provided me with an opportunity to expatiate on one of my pet subjects: Wedgwood jewellery. The company has long been a producer of elegant Jasper jewellery for both men and women—pendants, brooches, watch fobs, and chatelaines. It's a personal bugbear that this fact is not as well known as I'd like it to be. For the record, I'd like to let it be known that in my travels I am never—*never*—without my Jasper cufflinks and tiebar.

Another Jasper inclusion in The Lord Wedgwood Collection was The Music Lesson Plate bearing a motif modelled after a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds. In the same year that the plate first appeared (1782) Reynolds painted Josiah I's portrait. Today the plate stands as a reminder to me of the historic connection between Wedgwood and Britain's fine arts community, from Reynolds in the 1780s to Eduardo Paolozzi today.

To be sure, if Josiah I were alive today we would have our differences in taste. Russo Antico would be one of them: the founder hadn't much use for it and continued to produce it only at the urging of his business partner, Thomas Bentley. We would, however, be in complete agreement on the subject of Black Basalt. This black stoneware is named after the rock and is a refinement of the so-called Egyptian blackware used for all manner of ornamental items. Upon perfecting it in 1768, Josiah I wrote that "the black is sterling and will last forever." Since that time, Black Basalt has been the body of choice for prestige, special-edition items like Shape 225, a dinnerware pattern unveiled in 1984 to mark the company's 225th anniversary. Were you to visit my home, you'd find the busts, vases, candlesticks, and plaques modelled in this exquisite body very much in evidence. Black Basalt is equally well suited to engine-turned decoration, cast ornamentation, and enamel paintings. It's a medium that has been worked for Wedgwood by renowned artists and designers including George Stubbs, John Flaxman, E. W. Wyon, and Keith Murray. A personal favourite in Black Basalt is Flaxman's tablet "The Apotheosis of Homer."

Jasper portrait medallions and library busts made in either Black Basalt, or Parian, or Carrara ware interest me too. They all tell such a great story—from Mercury to Shakespeare, from Venus to Churchill.

Not just the great and the famous were honoured with Jasper or Basalt portrait medallions though. Josiah even made an image on a medallion of the builder, Edward Bourne, who built the Wedgwood family home, Etruria Hall, in Staffordshire, England. It can be seen in the Wedgwood museum at Barlaston with a bas-relief of Bourne's trowel alongside his head. Etruria Hall, built in the 1760s, can still be seen today, as it forms part of a hotel. Portrait medallions of the Royal Family are also a time-honoured Wedgwood tradition. I'm proud to say Wedgwood has produced royal commemoratives over more than two centuries, and ten reigns of monarchs.

Queen's Ware, first produced in 1762 and so called with the royal consent of Queen Charlotte, King George III's consort, is another personal favourite. Pieces from the "Frog Service," made for Empress Catherine the Great of Russia in 1774, are simply exquisite. Back in 1995 for the bicentenary of the death of Josiah I, we were able to exhibit around 250 pieces of this service at our exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The original dinner and dessert service comprised 952 pieces and depicted 1244 indi-

Turquoise Florentine fine bone china tableware (facing page) was first produced in 1924, however, the original design, by former Wedgwood art director, Thomas Allen, dates back to the 1880s.

New for 1998, Sarah's Garden stacking vegetable dishes (top). The dishes were inspired by Queen's Ware stacking meat pans and food carriers dating from c. 1850. A Queen's Ware Frog Service oval dish, featuring Etruria Hall, home of Josiah Wedgwood I (middle). A Queen's Ware Orange Bowl or Chestnut Basket (bottom).

vidually painted scenes of 18th-century British landscape and architecture. It's housed today in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

More than 200 years later, Queen's Ware remains in production for tableware and prestige ornamental items. An 18th-century tablepiece, the Orange Bowl, or Chestnut Basket as it was sometimes known, is still made by the traditional method of hand-piercing. Brian Bates, a master craftsman, is the third generation of his family to make it.

Brian learned the skill from his uncle. He worked for Wedgwood for 55 years, taking over from his uncle who had done 50 years service. Brian has told me how he used to rush to the factory after school to watch his uncle work and be given off-cuts to practise with. This is one of the most important things to me personally—that when I visit the factory, I can talk to people who keep the quality and the skill alive like generations before them, often their own family members. There can't be many companies still in existence today who can claim such family loyalty and longevity. I believe that if Josiah were here today he would also be equally pleased that making Wedgwood ware is still very much a hands-on business.

What I find most bracing about my association with today's Wedgwood is the manner in which age-old traditions are fused with state-of-the-art marketing and manufacturing techniques. Ceramic technology is constantly advancing and the company has invested some £16 million in plant machinery over the last two years and plans to spend a further £30 million over the next five years. The latest techniques in fast-firing, pressure casting, and multi-colour printing work together to improve costs, quality, and manufacturing flexibility.

Would Josiah approve? I think so. British Prime Minister William Gladstone once described Josiah Wedgwood as "the greatest man who ever, in any age or country, applied himself to the important work of uniting art with industry." He was as much a businessman and technical innovator as he was an arbiter of design and craftsmanship. His invention of the pyrometer, an instrument for measuring heat in kilns, gained him admission to the Royal Society in 1783. In marketing terms, he showed extraordinary entrepreneurship as he courted the British aristocracy, seeking their custom for a product he was determined to make available eventually to one and all. This was no mean feat for a provincial craftsman with little education, and I'm happy to say that the same *élan* informs our marketing efforts today as Wedgwood competes in an increasingly competitive world marketplace. I'm proud to be part of a company that continues to be both inspired by the legacy of its past and propelled by the opportunities for its future. ♔

A Rosso Antico vase with Egyptian motifs, c. 1785 (facing page). Josiah Wedgwood I was not fond of this design, although Thomas Bentley, his business partner, encouraged the design's production.

The famous Wedgwood Portland Vase (top), the body of which is made from Jasper ware, first perfected in 1774. A drawing of the vase appears as the Wedgwood trademark backstamp on all fine bone china to this day. The vase was inspired by the Barberini vase, a Roman cased-glass piece believed to date from the late first century BC. A Black Basalt Michelangelo lamp, c. 1785 (bottom). The black stoneware is named after the rock and is a refinement of the so-called Egyptian blackware.

Wedgwood International Society for Collectors

I'm passionate about encouraging collectors and that's why I'm patron of a new society created exclusively for them. The Wedgwood International Society was launched during summer 1997. It came about as I travelled around the world talking to Wedgwood enthusiasts and hearing that they wanted more information about product detail, manufacturing techniques, and the future plans of the company, as well as historical material. We hope to become one of the most prestigious collectors' societies around. For further information about the Society please write to Waterford Wedgwood Canada Inc., 20 West Beaver Creek Road, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 3L6.

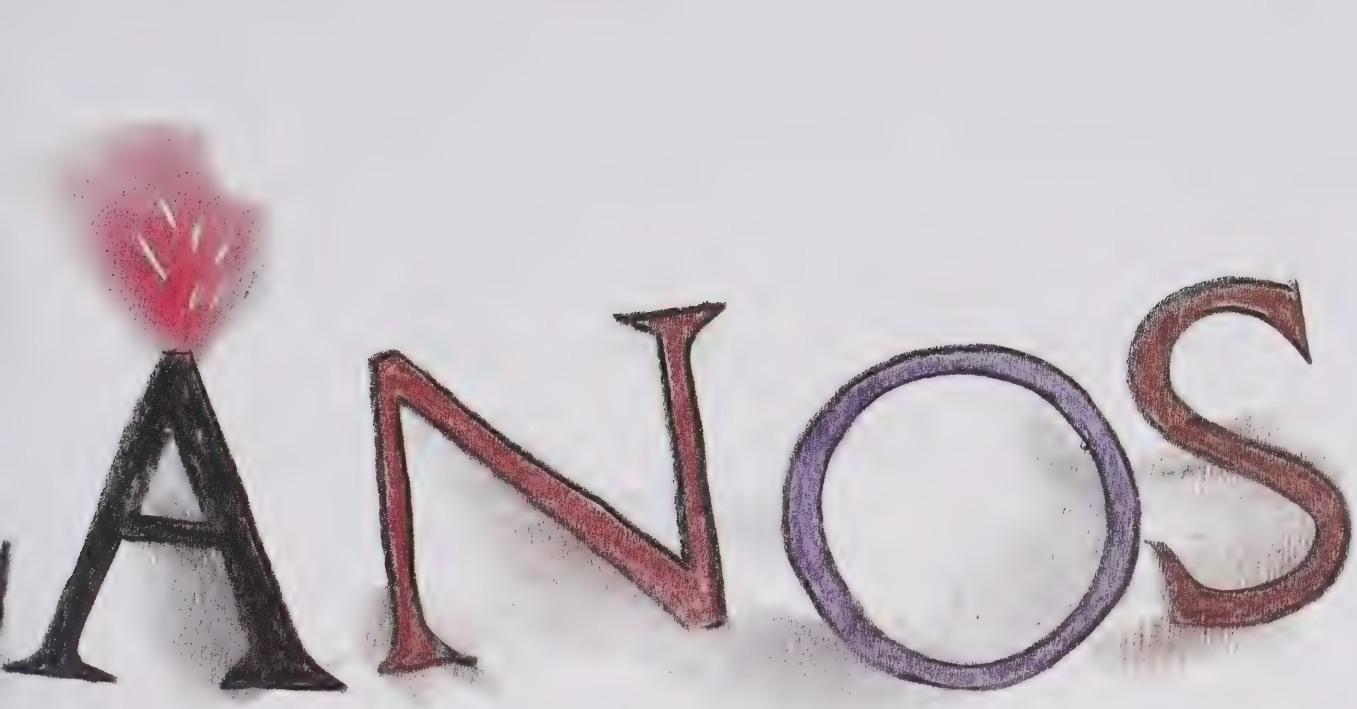
VOLC

TRIGGERS OF

Extreme volcanic eruptions may prove to be the leading

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HAS UNCOVERED EVIDENCE OF FIVE mass extinctions of life since the beginning of the Palaeozoic era some 550 million years ago. The most famous of these wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Fascination with this particular extinction may stem from the fact that it happened relatively recently on the geological time scale so that the rock record is still well preserved, especially its wealth of astounding dinosaur remains. And there is good reason to believe that the extinction was caused by one catastrophic event—the collision of Earth with a huge asteroid —something that could happen again at any time.

Sandra Kamo is lab manager in the Department of Earth Sciences, Royal Ontario Museum



Mass Extinction

cause of mass extinctions Sandra Kamo

The idea that meteorite impact played a role in biological revolutions was presented by Luis Alvarez and his son in 1980. The Alvarez theory revitalized the concept of catastrophism, which was an early attempt to explain geologic change by invoking great events such as the Biblical flood. Catastrophism was replaced by theories that geological changes occur gradually by processes that are seen to operate today: the present is the key to the past.

Ironically, the largest extinction on record is the one that ended the Palaeozoic era 250 million years ago, thereby setting the stage for dinosaur evolution in the new geologic era of the Mesozoic. It has been calculated that during this cataclysmic event more than 90 per cent of all ocean species of animals and plants and up to 70 per cent of land vertebrates were extinguished.

In contrast to the mountain of evidence for the asteroid impact at the time of the Cretaceous/Tertiary (K/T) boundary, there is no confirmed evidence in the geological record for such an extraterrestrial crisis at the Permian-Triassic (P/Tr) boundary. However, there have been fewer studies of this great event, and because it happened almost 200 million years earlier, the geological record is more fragmentary. What had been found until recently suggested a complicated, tangled web of causes rather than a single overwhelming event. In 1993, Douglas Erwin from the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC, brought together the information from scientific studies in his book *The Great Paleozoic Crisis: Life and Death in the Permian*. In it he states that "the end-Permian mass extinction brought the Paleozoic great experiment in marine life to a close during an interval of intense climatic, tectonic, and geochemical change. Improved knowledge of latest Permian faunas, coupled with recent advances in isotopic studies and biostratigraphy, have greatly enhanced our understanding of the events of 250 million years ago and have begun to provide answers to many questions about the causes of extinction."

Among the phenomena commonly described as triggers of mass extinctions are a dramatic drop in sea level, climatic stresses, and a collision between Earth and an extraterrestrial body. David Jablonski of the University of Chicago, an expert on the subject, reported that a major

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WENDY WORTSMAN

Volcanism, more fantastic in its scale than any experienced in histor

may have paved the way for the domination of the dinosaurs

drop in sea level has been associated with every major mass extinction on record. It has been estimated that sea level dropped by about 250 metres at the P/Tr boundary.

Sea-level fluctuations are recorded by changes in the sedimentary sequence and biostratigraphy, which reflect water depth. Such occurrences are devastating to colonies of plants and animals that thrive in shallow seas. But what causes the fluctuations? That is difficult to determine because the geological record shows only the effects, leaving the causes to be surmised. Global climatic cooling may dramatically increase the volume of glacial ice, thus locking up huge quantities of water.

Volcanism, on a scale that defies our wildest imagination, has also been considered an agent for the process of mass destruction. The violent 1980 explosion of Mount St. Helens in Washington produced a large ash cloud that reached stratospheric heights, but no appreciable effect on climate was detected. Particles of ash came together, became heavy, and fell out of the atmosphere rather quickly.

The key to estimating the devastation of an eruption on climate is to approximate the amount of sulphur gases emitted. Sulphuric acid aerosols, formed by the conversion of volcanic sulfur dioxide gas to sulphuric acid, can contribute significantly to surface cooling by remaining suspended in the atmosphere for long periods of time, absorbing and reflecting sunlight.

Mount St. Helens released only small amounts of sulphuric acid aerosols. An eruption similar in size, from the Mexican volcano El Chichón, was reported in 1982. Michael Rampino, a specialist from New York University on the effects of volcanism on climate, called this incident the "test case for which volcanologists and atmospheric scientists had been waiting." While the volcanic ejecta was volumetrically similar to that spewed from Mount St. Helens, the sulphur dioxide content was much higher. A cooling trend was apparent the following summer and subsequent winters; some scientists believe that the cold 1984–1985 winter resulted from lingering aerosols produced by this eruption. Drawing conclusions about the direct climatic effects was complicated, however, by the impact of the severe El Niño, the Pacific Ocean current of 1982–1983.

The violent 1980 explosion of Mount St. Helens in Washington produced a large ash cloud that reached stratospheric heights, but no appreciable effect on climate was detected

Interestingly, Benjamin Franklin made the first recorded observation of the potential effects of volcano-derived aerosols on climate. In 1783, an eruption of the Laki fissure in Iceland lasted for eight months. The fissure, a land mass located astride the mid-Atlantic spreading centre, released copious amounts of toxic gases containing sulphur, chlorine, and fluorine. Crops were devastated and 75 per cent of the Icelandic livestock was lost. The resulting famine killed 24 per cent of the Icelandic human population. More than 12 cubic kilometres of basaltic magma, rich in iron and with high concentrations of sulphur, chlorine, and fluorine erupted from a 13-kilometre-long fissure.

Sunlight was reduced and the atmosphere became extremely cold. Franklin, who was working in Europe the following year, noted what he called a "dry fog" and wrote that the rays of the sun "were indeed rendered so faint in passing through it that, when collected in the focus of a burning glass, they would scarce kindle brown paper."

The process of basaltic volcanism that occurs in Iceland takes place along diverging oceanic plate boundaries. It is also thought to happen at a time when continents first begin to split apart. One mechanism capable of precipitating the initial breakup of a continent is the emergence of a mantle plume, which is thought to originate at the interface between the Earth's core and mantle, about 2900 kilometres below the surface. An enormous plume of hot molten material rises through the Earth's mantle, creating a hotspot at the base of the crust, triggering rapid, large-scale volcanism above this upwelling.

Today the Hawaiian islands are actively forming by this process in the Pacific Ocean. A continental example of this process, in its early extension and rifting stage, is the Red Sea-East African rift system.

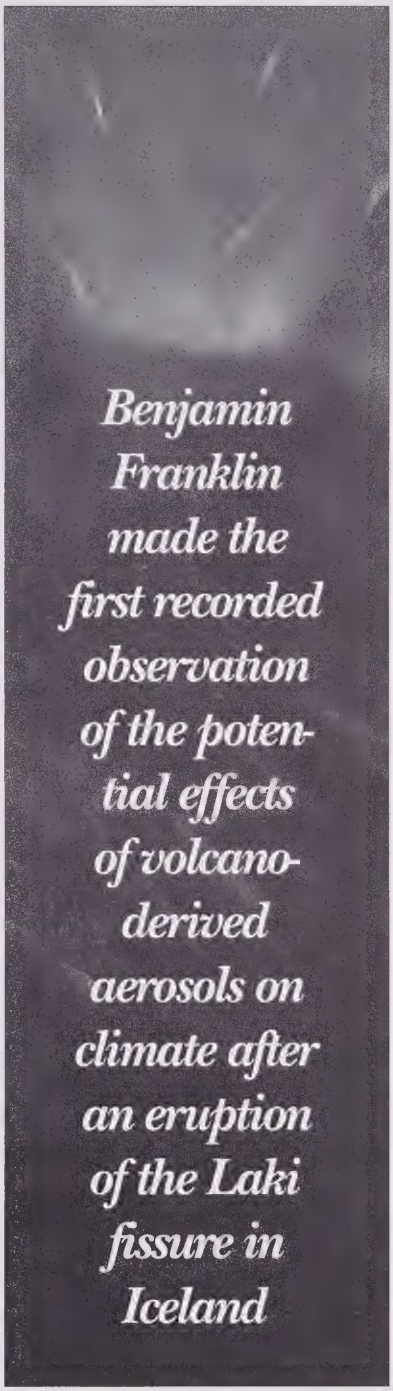
Hotspot volcanism has been responsible for enormous outpourings of basalt in the geological past. Studies conducted by ROM staff on a spectacular ancient flood basalt, the Siberian Traps, possibly the largest episode of flood basalt volcanism in the history of the Earth, have shown that this volcanic event took place at the P/Tr boundary. The word "traps" is derived from the Swedish word for stairs. A terraced or stepped surface is

found at the eroded margins of the accumulated sheets of lava. Before erosion, the Siberian Traps, located in north central Siberia, covered an area of about 4 million square kilometres and had a volume of 2 to 3 million cubic kilometres. Because of the enormous volume of these sulphur-rich lavas, it has been suggested that their eruption was a major contributor to the environmental stress that brought about the mass extinction at the P/Tr boundary.

Several earlier studies also support this claim. Gerald Czamanske of the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California, was instrumental in producing some of these works. His primary interest was the study of the associated ore-bearing intrusive rocks in the Noril'sk region, a site famed for its rich deposits of platinum, nickel, and copper. Upon learning that there was an uncertainty of 30 to 40 million years in the age of these intrusions, as well as of the associated flood basalts, Czamanske assembled an international group of researchers from Australia, the United States, and Russia to attempt to date more accurately the Siberian volcanic eruptions.

The best method of obtaining accurate crystallization ages of older rocks is by dating zircon crystals, using the uranium-lead method. However, zircons rarely crystallize in lavas; therefore the associated Noril'sk intrusions were dated instead. Researchers in Australia extracted a small number of zircon crystals from one of the intrusions. By using an instrument called a Sensitive High-Resolution Ion Microprobe, they obtained a uranium-lead age of 248 ± 4 million years.

An earlier study from the same Australian laboratory reported an age of 251 ± 4 million years for zircons from a volcanic ash layer in China that is widely recognized from the fossil record as best defining the precise position of the P/Tr boundary. While the two studies established that the Chinese ash layer and the Siberian intrusions are indistinguishable in age, it was apparent that more precise data were needed to prove a possible connection between Siberian flood-basalt volcanism and the greatest mass extinction event on record. Czamanske came to the ROM geochronology group because of its reputation for deriving accurate ages using innovative uranium-lead dating methods.


Benjamin Franklin made the first recorded observation of the potential effects of volcano-derived aerosols on climate after an eruption of the Laki fissure in Iceland

Two 15-kilogram rock samples were collected by Valeri Federenko, a Russian researcher, and sent to the ROM. Minute crystals of zircon and baddeleyite, a mineral also extremely useful for dating, were extracted and dated by ROM scientists. The culmination of this multinational effort was the recent publication of an age of 251.2 ± 0.3 million years for the ore-bearing intrusion that cuts the lower part of the basalt sequence. This age, by far the most accurate and precise available, firmly establishes Siberian volcanism as a possible contributor to the mass extinction. Douglas Erwin has noted that if it could be shown that Siberian flood-basalt volcanism slightly predated the P/Tr mass extinction, thereby allowing for a causal effect, then it would solidify arguments in support of volcanism as the primary reason for the extinctions. Work is underway at the ROM to establish a more precise and accurate age for the Chinese ash layer at the P/Tr boundary in order to resolve this issue.

Several features of the Siberian flood-basalt volcanic event make it a likely candidate for the cause of the devastation of marine and terrestrial life at the end of the Permian period. First, it is arguably the largest of all such known events; it probably lasted for about a million years. By virtue of its association with enormous sulphide ore deposits, much of the basaltic lava may be assumed to have been saturated by sulphur when erupted. Second, the volcanism was exceptionally explosive as can be seen from the unusual abundance of fragmental rocks called tuffs. It is therefore likely that large volumes of sulphuric acid aerosols were ejected into the atmosphere. Third, the sedimentary sequence within a few hundred metres of the base of the basalts contains minable thicknesses of coal and anhydrite, which may have been blown into the atmosphere thus adding to the environmental stress.

One can imagine copious amounts of sulphate aerosols associated with this unprecedented volcanism leading to global cooling, expansion of existing ice caps, a sea level regression, and acid rainfall. Thus this, and perhaps other extinctions, may have been precipitated by a single cause. Volcanism, more fantastic in its scale than any experienced in history, may have paved the way for the domination of the dinosaurs. ❦

MADE IN ENGLAND?

An 18th-century trade embargo of foreign embroidery raises interesting questions about the meaning of "foreign"

EDWARD MAEDER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

FOREIGN TRADE IS A HOTTER TOPIC THAN EVER TODAY. ACRONYMS are flourishing, from NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) to WTO (World Trade Organization). As national economies become more global, the standardization of currencies, the equalization of trade, the ending of tariffs and subsidies, and a host of other issues are constantly being discussed and debated.

Political concerns also enter the mix. In the recent past, for example, Canada and other nations banned the importation of many products from South Africa to protest apartheid. The United States still bans products from Cuba and has exerted pressure on its allies to do the same. Protests over human rights violations in China took place on each stop of the President of China's recent visit to the United States and Canada, where he came to discuss trade.

Such economic and political matters are not new. Needless to say, foreign trade was a major issue during the hostilities between England and France in the 18th century.

Edward Maeder is former director of the Bata Shoe Museum and was the recipient of a Veronika Gervers Fellowship from the Textiles Section of the Department of Near Eastern and Asian Civilizations, Royal Ontario Museum

English man's coat and breeches made of brocaded velvet with silk embroidery, 1780s. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Combined with the outburst of nationalism during this period, it led to one of the strangest Acts of Parliament ever passed and implemented in Britain. As a Veronika Gervers Fellow, I decided to research that act and the reasoning behind it, because more than 100 pieces of men's 18th-century embroidered costume in the ROM's collections may have been affected by it.

Passed in 1749, the act served to "prevent the importation and wear of foreign embroidery and brocade, and of gold and silver thread, lace, or other work made of gold or silver wire manufactured in foreign parts." Although this may appear nonsensical to our modern sensibilities, the act was a result of the nationalistic pressures exerted by the Antigallican Society, formed in 1745, by such worthies as Horace Walpole and Mr. Janssen, later Lord Mayor of London. The society was formed "to promote the BRITISH MANUFACTURIES, to extend the commerce of England, and to discourage the introducing of French Modes, and oppose Importation of French Commodities. . . . [It]was always composed of Gentlemen of the best Character and Address, none being admitted but persons of Reputation and Loyalty."

Gentleman's Magazine, sounding board of British sentiment, published a letter in January 1746, which had appeared in Mr. Faulkner's Dublin *Journal*. "Whether all persons who wear French waistcoats, or any French commodities, do not in effect send money to the pretender, or, what is the same thing, to the French king, the pretender's avowed abettor? and whether, if they are to be tryed for so doing by the laws of common sense and right reason, they would not be convicted of high treason?"

The smuggling of foreign goods was passionately discussed on the pages of popular magazines. In a lengthy letter to Mr. Urban of *Gentleman's Magazine* it was stated:

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, taking into consideration the fatal consequences that do attend the clandestine importation of French goods into these kingdoms. Whereby the farmers, manufacturers, and many other amongst us are reduc'd to great straits—as the same time the power and ambition of our most perfidious enemies promoted—Do resolve, and hereby declare, that we will not (without a real necessity) purchase, for ourselves or families, any French brandies, wines, silks, lace, cambricks, lawns, or any other goods we believe to be the produce or manufactures of our enemies. But on the contrary, it shall be our study to promote (as far as lies in our power) the welfare of Great Britain, Ireland, and our plantations, by wearing and consuming the produce and manufactures thereof, and abstain from the luxurious articles of France and Spain.

What was the state of English embroidery when the act was passed? Mr. R. Campbell described such work in his publication of 1747 entitled *London Tradesman being a COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF ALL the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, now practiced in the Cities of London and Westminster. CALCULATED For the Information of PARENTS, and Instruction of YOUTH in their Choice of Business.*

Embroiderers may be reckoned among the Dependants of the Lace-Man: as in his Shop the greatest Part of their rich Work is vended, and he furnishes them with all Materials for their Business. It is chiefly performed by Women; is an ingenious Art, requires a nice Taste in Drawing, a bold Fancy to invent new Patterns, and a clean Hand to save their Work from tarnishing. . . . Few of the Workers at present can Draw, they have their Patterns from the Pattern-Drawer, who must likewise draw the Work it self, which they only fill up, with Gold and Silver, Silks or Worsteds, according to its Use and Nature. We are far from excelling in this Branch of Business in England: The Nuns in Foreign Countries far exceed any thing we can perform. We make some good Work: but fall short of the bold Fancy in French and Italian Embroidery: This I take to be chiefly owing to the Want of a Taste for Drawing in the Performers; they may go on in a dull beaten Tract, or servilely imitate a Foreign Pattern, but know not how to advance the Beauty of the old or strike out any new Invention worth Notice. An Embroiderer ought to have a Taste for Designing, and a just Notion of the Principles of Light and Shade, to know how to range their Colours in a natural Order, make them reflect upon one another, and the whole to represent the Figure in its proper Shade."

The Lace Man: His chief Talent ought to lie in a nice Taste in Patterns of Lace, &c. He ought to speak fluently, though not elegantly, to entertain the Ladies; and to be Master of a handsome Bow and Cringe; should be able to hand a Lady to and from her Coach Politely, without getting seized with the Palpitation of the Heart at the Thought of a delicate Hand, a well-turned and much exposed Limb, or a handsome Face: But, above all, he must have confidence to

The smuggling of foreign goods was passionately discussed on the pages of popular magazines

English man's coat made of wool with silk embroidery, 1780s. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.

refuse his Goods in a handsome Manner to the extravagant Beau who never pays, and Patience as well as Stock to bear the delays of the sharping Peer, who pays but seldom. With these natural Qualifications, five Thousand Pounds in his Pocket, and a Set of good Customers in view, a young Man may commence Lace-Man; If he trusts moderately, and with Discretion, lies with Economy, and minds his Business more than his Mistress, he may live to increase his Stock; but otherwise I know no readier Road to a Jail, and Destruction, than a Lace-Man's Business.

By 1752, the ban on embroidery and lace was being vigorously enforced. In January, *Gentleman's Magazine* announced: "A parcel of waistcoats embroidered with foreign gold & silver (which were lately seized at a taylors house, who must pay the penalty of 100 pursuant to the act of parliament) were publicly burnt in preference of the custom-house officers and others." And in June, another story: "A considerable quantity of foreign gold and silver lace, seized at a taylors who paid the penalty of 100, was publicly burnt."

At year's end the hysteria had reach such proportions that a note in *Gentleman's Magazine* stated: "A law is talk'd of, to be proposed to prevent children from being sent to be educated abroad, and brought up enemies to the religion and laws of their country. And another against gentlemen making the tour of Europe, to carry abroad the wealth and virtue of the nation."

Authors such as Tobias Smollett wrote about the smuggling of embroideries and lace. In his novel *The Adventures of Count Fathom* (1753), one culprit was apprehended "who being stripped of his upper garments, and even of his shirt, appeared like the mummy of an Aegyptian king, most curiously rolled up in bandages of rich figured gold shalloon, [a type of thin wool] that covered the skirts of four embroidered waistcoats."

In 1757 a book was written by Malachy Postlethwayt (1707–1767), which suggested a solution for the "present misfortunes of the nation. So bewitching is our French taste, that the British and Irish money, spent in travel there can hardly be so little one year within another as 200,000 £ Sterling per annum, balance against us in this article; the French spending little here, in comparison to what our gentry do in France."

The standoff with the French had turned into the Seven Years War in 1756. When the war ended, however, the prohibition on the importation of French goods continued. In August 1764 the *London Chronicle* announced: "We hear that a great seizure was lately made at the Custom House, of vast quantities of French embroidery, French silks, French ruffles, and French everything, the property of a certain great Earl. [Surely a petty smuggler, who may plead his necessities for violating the laws, is more excusable than a Peer and Legislator, who infringes them from vanity, or some worse motive: Yet the former is hanged, while the latter, so far from dreading punishment, dares to insult those who have done their duty.]"

The Peer and Legislator, although anonymous in the paper, was well known in the higher social circles. Lady Mary Coke, a prolific letter writer of the day, made reference to this incident when she wrote to Lady Strafford on 14 September 1764, "Since the seizure of Lord and Lady Holderness's baggage, everything that can is taken from everybody." Lady Holland wrote to Lady Kildare, six days earlier that, "the custom-house people are most immensely strict just now on account of the infinite quantity of french goods imported." A month later she wrote, "Lady Holderness has done us all great mischief—indeed the officers are so exceeding strict just now, 'tis a bad time to attempt getting anything from abroad." Through this kind of exposure Lady Holderness became known as the Queen of Smugglers.

Of the more than 200 garments listed in detail in the newspaper, only one was "Said to be her ladyship's own working," which gives the impression that this particular piece was legally imported. The article continued by mentioning "Besides the above, we are told that a complete house of furniture, from the most expensive and magnificent part of it, to the meanest utensil, is hourly expected to arrive for the same great personage." Fifteen years after the act was passed, the prohibition against foreign embroidery was still being flouted.

Lord Holderness, a Peer of the Realm as well as Ambassador to Venice and the holder of several other important posts, seems an unlikely candidate for such exposure. Perhaps he thought, as the paper suggests, that he was above the law. This remains, for the most part, an unopened chapter in the social history of commerce.

How could embroidery be identified as foreign? What were the tell-tale signs that were instantly recognizable? Were the English responsible for slavish symmetry of detail?

English man's coat and waistcoat made of silk with silk embroidery, 1770. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to know the exact appearance of the embroidered garments that once belonged to Lord and Lady Holderness. However, there are today museum collections holding large numbers of garments with the floral decoration fashionable during the second half of the 18th century.

In the course of examining the embroidered garments in the ROM's extensive collection, I was struck by how carefully and accurately the flowers were rendered. Flowers had been a major motif in all of the decorative arts for centuries but with the discovery and cultivation of new plants different kinds of gardens developed in Europe.

As early as the 1540s the Fugger family in Augsburg boasted a garden containing a wide variety of tulips. By the 1580s several royal gardens had been established. Savants such as Nicolas Claude Fabri di Pieresc (1580–1637), whose chateau, Belgentier, near Toulon, contained one of the most important gardens in Europe, collected rare plants from as far afield as the Caucasus and even China. In 1588 the famous golden rose was finally grown in Europe. The Elizabethans, the Valois, the Italians, the Germans, and the Austrians were obsessed with flowers.

As gardens became an integral part of genteel society, so the colours and types of flowers seen on silk brocades, painted silks, and especially embroideries grew in variety and beauty of execution. In 1726 John Lawrence gave his views on the subject of women gardeners in his *New System . . . a complete Body of Husbandry and Gardening:* "I flatter myself the Ladies would soon be thinking that their vacant Hours in the Culture of the *Flower-Garden* would be more innocently spent and with greater Satisfaction than the common Talk over a Tea-Table where Envy and Detraction so commonly preside. Whereas when Opportunity and Weather invite them amongst their Flowers, there they [the Ladies] may dress, and admire and cultivate Beauties like themselves without *envying or being envied.*"

As I examined and photographed the floral details on the men's coats in the ROM's collection, a thought kept going through my mind. I remembered my visits to stately homes in England and how the guides were prodigiously proud of their glorious and well-thought-out, "herbaceous borders." According to Mark Laird who published *The Formal Garden: Traditions of Art and Nature* in 1992:

In traditional palace gardens, the influence of England was registered in the increasing use of the parterre à l'anglaise— *Ease of maintenance and natural appearance helped promote the cause of the grass parterre. Paradoxically, an alternative tendency towards elaborate floral borders also arose out of the quest for naturalness; natural herbaceous plants increasingly replaced artificial topiary within the plate-bands of the parterre. . . . the plan of Schwetzinger in 1753 demonstrates these two tendencies combined into one; these were the grass parterres with flower borders. Indeed, during the Rococo period flowers became the preferred decorative element; the flower parterre was sometimes promoted to a central position over the* parterre de broderie.

Was I looking at embroidered "herbaceous borders?" Were some of the border motifs representative of either brickwork or trellises? Did the velvet and the dark wool grounds represent the grass lawn element of the popular parterre?

In the second half of the 18th century, publication of recently discovered plants through the sale of hand-coloured engravings became highly fashionable. As was always the case with embroidered garments, the newer the motif the more prestigious the wearer. Although this was more often the case with waistcoats, which could number in the hundreds for a man of fashion living in Paris in the 1780s, it also applied to the formal, court, and evening wear worn in the last decades of the century.

Returning to the Act of Parliament, the big question is how could embroidery be identified as foreign? What were the telltale signs that were instantly recognizable? Were the English responsible for slavish symmetry of detail? What was English? What was French? For that matter, what was German or Italian? Think of our own times when products from clothing to cars can be manufactured in one place with materials and parts supplied from all over the world.

The Act of Parliament does pose an interesting problem and what I hope to discover is a way to determine the national origins of this astonishingly beautiful art of the needle. Women have always been considered the "flowers" in the Garden of Life, but I think I can safely say that in the second half of the 18th century, men wore the herbaceous borders. ✿

The Egyptian ibis pictured above developed an odd powdery substance on its surface, which can be clearly seen in the detail below.

Furry Cats and Other Egyptian Pets

I FREQUENTLY RECEIVE INQUIRIES FROM collectors concerned about valued Egyptian bronze antiquities in their possession that have developed pustules erupting a blue-green powder. This powder sometimes begins to obscure the objects' surface detail or lifts up the surface, a process known as spalling.

Two cases brought to my attention were particularly intriguing. They involved objects purchased decades ago—one in Egypt and the other locally. Both showed a mixed white-and-turquoise blue efflorescence with associated spalling and pitting of the surface. Their apparent deterioration was extremely upsetting to the owners.

One type of destructive corrosion, known as bronze disease (paratacamite), occurs on objects made of bronze (copper and its alloys) when they are subjected to high humidities in the presence of salt (sodium chloride) from handling, burial in the ground, or exposure to windborne salt particles. Bronze disease is indicated by the presence of a furry light green or light green-blue powder.

While the corrosion on the two objects was active and disfiguring, it did not look like typical bronze disease. To identify the problem correctly, the corrosion products had to be analyzed. This is an expensive procedure; however, when I explained the problem to two colleagues in the Mineralogy Section of the Department of Earth Sciences at the ROM, they offered to conduct the analysis, partially to satisfy their own scientific curiosity.

I approached Malcolm Back about the first object, a small cat. He was able to identify its corrosion by X-ray Diffraction (XRD). This is an X-ray method that can be used to identify chemical compounds present in a sample. The white efflores-

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

cence matched a compound for zinc sulphate chloride hydroxide hydrate. Finding a zinc-bearing compound was completely unexpected and therefore perplexing.

The corrosion on the second object, an ibis, was also sampled. Because the XRD results on the ibis were ambiguous corrosion samples on this object were analyzed by another technique—X-ray fluorescence spectrometry—to determine what elements were present in significant quantities. Performed by Bob Ramik, this analysis revealed that the white outer crust was composed of large amounts of copper, zinc, chlorine, and sodium, as well as lesser amounts of lead and iron. The blue crust was composed of large amounts of copper, zinc, and chlorine.

By definition, bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. Other elements may be present, creating more complicated alloys. Egyptian bronzes were typically composed of copper, tin, and varying amounts of lead. However, neither the cat nor the ibis contained any tin. The presence of large amounts of zinc implies that these purported bronzes are, in fact, brass, an alloy of copper and zinc.

Egyptians did not manufacture brass statuettes in Pharaonic times. Therefore, one must assume that the cat and the ibis are actually reproductions. The unusual corrosion may be the result of chemical residues left on the metal after "patination" of the objects to make them look ancient and authentic.

I was sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but relieved to find that both owners gracefully accepted the reports on the authenticity of their objects. So, once again, buyer beware. While you may be correct in thinking a purchase is out of the ordinary, you may eventually find that you were right for the wrong reasons.

SUSAN STOCK
Susan Stock is metals conservator in the Conservation Department of the Royal Ontario Museum

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ROM Answers

Dear ROM Answers,
My mother, now 91 years old, gave me this bowl. It was given to her by her cousin, who in turn had received it from a close friend in the 1920s. The friend lived in her own house on Queen's Park Circle and had many beautiful and valuable possessions, the bowl being one of them. It is green, 34.8 cm in diameter, 7.2 cm high, and 4.8 cm deep. On the back it is marked "Dagmer 1845 H Gouda Holland."

My mother's cousin displayed the bowl on a table by the front door, where she used it to receive visitors' cards. We hope that you can satisfy our curiosity about this unusual piece.

G. D., Claremont, Ontario

Dear Reader,
Congratulations. You own a very nice and large example of Gouda Pottery made in The Netherlands in the early years of the 20th century. Potting has been an important industry in Gouda since the early 1700s. By the 1890s, there were a number of potteries and decorators located there. Items with floral and patterned decoration inspired by the Art Nouveau style became a speciality of the local potting industry. Early examples, which are less common, usually have a glossy glaze. The majority that one sees today have the matte glaze found on your bowl.

Often the decoration or the colours were inspired by batiks (colourful dyed fabrics) from Indonesia, which was a Dutch colony at the time. Many of the patterns were given a woman's name or that of a flower. "DAGMAR" is likely the pattern name; "1845" may be the pattern number. "OM" may be the decorator's initials. The funny little stick house or kiln and the "GOUDA/HOLLAND" are commonly part of the marks. There also appear to be marks incised into the clay that refer to the model and perhaps the size of the bowl.

The form of the bowl is derived from traditional Chinese ceramics. A smaller bowl of similar form with a matching ceramic drum-shaped flower holder with holes on the top (974.4a-b) is on display in the Ceramics Section of the Samuel European Galleries at the ROM. It was made by the Regina Factory in Gouda and marked "Ryrie-Birks" for sale by Birks in Toronto during the 1920s. At the time, fine contemporary Dutch ceramics were owned by many Canadians. A bowl like this one would not have been out of place in one of the prestigious private homes that existed around Queen's Park, Toronto, prior to World War II. It was usual to have a tray or some other formal container near the front door to receive calling cards. Old Gouda pottery continues to be very collectable. You may wish to consult an experienced antique dealer, auctioneer, or appraiser to find out whether your bowl is worth having appraised for insurance purposes. For illustrations of representative examples, consult C. W. Moody, *Gouda Ceramics; The Art Nouveau Era of Holland* (Berkeley, California: A Mike Roberts Color Production, c. 1970).

Your bowl has one of the most strikingly abstract examples of a Gouda pattern that I have ever seen. Thank you for writing to ROM Answers.

Peter Kaellgren,
Department of Western Art and Culture, Royal Ontario Museum

Dear ROM Answers,
For the past two years I have been trying to identify a dessert set given to me in England 20 years ago by an aunt. I unfortunately did not ask her at that time for any information about where she acquired this china or its history.

If you possess furniture, silver, glass, metalwork, ceramics, textiles, or small decorative objects that may have an interesting past and have aroused your curiosity, this column is for you. Send a clear black-and-white photograph (or 35-mm colour slide) of the object against a simple background, providing dimensions, a description, any markings, or any known details of its history to: ROM Answers, c/o Rotunda Magazine, *Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C6. Be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope large enough to include any photos that we must return to you with the reply.*

Neither Rotunda *nor the author nor any other person who may be consulted assumes any legal responsibility for these opinions or their ramifications. No financial appraisals will be offered. If your query is selected to be published in the column, only your initials and city will appear, in order to protect your privacy. Letters will be acknowledged as staff time comes available.*

I have received two expert opinions that differ widely as you can see from the enclosed reports. I do hope that you can identify this china for me and I look forward to your reply.

E. C. R., HALIFAX, N.S.

Dear Reader,

It is interesting to read the opinions of the two outside experts. Judging from the photographs, your dessert service is definitely not French, Sèvres porcelain, c. 1779. I have never seen French porcelain shaped or decorated like your service. The expert who suggested that it was English, soft-paste porcelain of about 1800–1820, with hand-painted decoration, was closer to the truth. The shapes are all typical of English porcelain dessert wares. Nearly all of these were made of a soft-paste body, that is to say a porcelain body that is not as hard as hard-paste porcelain, which is the type produced in China and Germany, and fired in kilns at a higher temperature. English porcelain was made with a variety of ingredients. By the early 1800s, bone ash was often an important component, which gave rise to the term "bone porcelain."

I would date your dessert service to about 1820–1850, probably towards the latter date. The flower bouquets are similar to those painted on many of the wares made at Coalport during this period, though there seems to be a bit more rosy pink than on Coalport wares. The shapes are not Coalport. So far I have not been able to find the panelled shape in any of the books on the key English potteries of the period. The arrangement of the border into eight sections suggests a date in the 1840s, when octagon jugs and panelled shapes of table wares were popular products of the English ceramic factories. Although the floral painting is competent, the borders are rendered in a very simplified manner, which again suggests a late date. In the 1820s, borders could be quite elaborate. The panels of pale creamy palomino colour outlined in puce with similar decoration on the handles of serving pieces is again a rather 1840s colour scheme. A better-grade version of this service would have had the panels outlined in gold with gold highlights on the handles.

What other ways can the date and factory be identified? The shape of the leafy handles, the shape of the pedestal of the comport (footed dish), and the shapes of the serving dishes and the individual plates are all distinctive of a certain factory. However, moulds did circulate among the English potteries, particularly in Staffordshire, and models were copied; so, it is possible that your set is either a competent popular line from a large important pottery or a copy made at one of the smaller lesser-known works. China decorators also moved around, which can account for the Coalport style of the flowers.

A final guide for English porcelain of this period is the pattern number. This was painted in small numbers, usually in a less expensive colour such as iron red or puce, on the bottom of the pieces. The number corresponded to one in the factory pattern book, where all of the patterns were drawn and painted in watercolour. A low pattern number suggests that a set was made early in the history of a factory of by a pottery that was small and produced few patterns. A high pattern number suggests that it came from a large factory. Some of the prolific companies such as Coalport even used fractional pattern numbers to indicate part of a new or different series (i.e., tea wares, dessert wares, etc.). Check the bottoms of your pieces for a pattern number. Sometimes these have worn away and you need to turn the piece around in the light so that you can see the shadow of the number remaining on the bottom.

Given the number and range of the serving pieces, your dessert service may originally have included two or three dozen plates. Some expensive services were very extensive and even included large covered containers for serving ice cream or chilled fruit and small, urn-shaped tureens with covers for sauces, cream, etc. It is not likely that your aunt in England would have been able to tell you anything other than who in your family may have owned the service. Families rarely know the origins of ceramics that do not bear identifiable trademarks. Most of the books that help to attribute ceramics of this type have been published since 1970. Thank you for sharing your heirloom dessert service with our readers.

P. K.

Going to St. Ives, Meet Mabel Dodge and Witter Bynner, an African Dwelling Tradition, Canadian Furniture

I'M LOOKING AT ONE OF THOSE WONderful early Penguins from before the Second World War, the first generation of mass-market paperbacks. It's *Cornwall,* part of the Penguin Guides series (price: sixpence). The village of St. Ives is described as "probably the best known of all the Cornish resorts." The writer adds: "Like several others, [St. Ives] leads a double life. The old town is bunched around the harbour; fishing was the industry that sustained it. To a certain extent it still does, but its visitors are of at least equal importance, and a new St. Ives has grown away up the hill." Then we are told: "There has long been an artists' colony at St. Ives, and there is often an exhibition on at the Porthmeor Art Gallery; also there is a collection of pictures at the Queen's Hotel and a room with panels painted by resident artists in the Sloop Inn."

How innocent that sounds in retrospect. The artistic reputation of this part of extreme southwestern England dates back to 1884 when James Abbot McNeill Whistler and Walter Sickert both wintered there. They were attracted by the ever-changing light and the singular landscape, which is characterized by rocks, cliffs, and beaches that aeons of wind have carved into fanciful or frightening shapes. The availability of cheap cottages was probably part of the appeal as well. Yet it was only in 1939, the year the Penguin *Cornwall* was published, that St. Ives started to come into its own as an art centre. Alan Bowness, the director of the Tate Gallery in London, writes in his foreword to **St. Ives 1939–64** (UBC Press, $75) that whereas many British surrealists took off for America as the war loomed, "of the smaller abstract avant-garde of the 1930s, a substantial portion ended up in St. Ives."

The list of personnel is a long one indeed and would have to include the painter Ben Nicolson and the sculptor Barbara Hepworth. It would also include the great potter Bernard Leach, who settled in St. Ives after studying in Japan and established his famous pottery, which turned out both "production" and "studio" ceramics and virtually reinvented the craft insofar as Britain and Europe were concerned.

All of them seem to be remembered affectionately in David Lewis's essay "St. Ives, A Personal Memoir, 1947–55," which helps to lift this art book beyond the level of most, with their twisted academic writing. Lewis's prose is lyrical and mellow, though he is keen in his perceptions. Nicolson, he remembers, "worked on a small ordinary kitchen table, and on it were tubes of paint and rags and glass jars stuffed with brushes and pencils, either flat brown carpenters' pencils which produced a juicy black line or pencils striped like barbers' poles, and he had a way of laying a sharpened pencil on the table as though it were the instrument of a surgeon." Lewis is not merely anecdotal, however, but shows how a locality begat a certain aesthetic and intellectual style. The art critic Herbert Read's brand of anarchism was very much in the air at the time, he reports, and the presence of so many artists naturally attracted a number of writers as well (including Robin Skelton, the future Canadian, who recreated the atmosphere vividly in his book *Memoirs of a Literary Blockhead.)*

Skelton's book was published in 1988, the same year that the Thatcher government in Britain began to decentralize some of the nation's major cultural institutions. The first step was to open a branch of the Tate Galley in Liverpool, which would be a sort of clearing-house through which regional art could be seen by the outside world and Liverpudlians could have easier access to national collections. This was followed in turn by a third Tate—at St. Ives. Its presence there, under the directorship of Michael Tooby (a loyal friend, by the way, of Canadian art, both historical and contemporary), has brought new life to the arts in Cornwall and increased Cornwall's presence in the art world.

St. Ives 1939–64 was published originally, in much thinner form, as the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Tate (the mother Tate, so to call it) in 1988. Demand for it continued, though the volume quickly went out of print. This new edition has been considerably revised and expanded, and contains a wealth of biographical and art-historical information as well as hundreds of large colour plates and both contemporary and archival photos.

SOME OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST TO *Rotunda* readers:

• Several years ago Lois Palken Rudnick wrote a biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan, the great American arts patron and friend-of-everyone, whose salons, first in Florence, then in New York, and finally, for

the longest period, in Taos, New Mexico, were important places indeed on the map of the American vanguard. Luhan, who lived until 1962, age 83, is perhaps best known for her support of D. H. Lawrence, whom she recalled in a 1932 book, *Lorenzo in Taos.* But she turns up in the memoirs and biographies of two entire generations of writers and visual artists. She was the subject of a famous piece by Gertrude Stein called "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia." She was also a character in numerous people's novels.

Two new books have appeared to keep her name in front of our eyes. One is **A History of Having a Great Many Times Not Continued to Be Friends: The Correspondence between Mabel Dodge & Gertrude Stein, 1911–1934**, edited by Patricia R. Everett (University of New Mexico Press, $US29.95). Dodge and Stein—individuals who seemed fated not ever to get along, because, in the long run, they were rivals in arts patronage—met originally in Paris in 1911. In 1913, the year of the Armory Show, which introduced modernist art to New York, Dodge wrote an article that gave Stein her first bout of publicity in her native land. The friendship seems to have been rather one-sided, however, with more than a hundred letters from Dodge to Stein but only 30 in the other direction. That the acquaintanceship did not mature beyond a certain point doesn't seem to have been the fault of Mabel Dodge—or Mable Dodge Luhan as she became in 1917, when she moved to Taos, a New Mexico sleepy desert village of a few thousand, and married a Native American named Tony Luhan, who had grown up at nearby Taos Pueblo.

The year after moving to the desert community, the Luhans began construction of Los Gallos, an extraordinary adobe house, or rather, collection of houses, or compound, which she filled not only with important works of modernism but also with important modernists themselves. A list of the more important long-term visitors over the 44 years Luhan lived there would include the painters Maurice Sterne, Marsden Hartley, Georgia O'Keefe, the photographers Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, and the writers Mary Austin, Willa Cather, Jean Toomer, Aldous Huxley, Edmund Wilson, and Robinson Jeffers. Leopold Stokowski the Anglo-American conductor, Martha Graham, the American choreographer, and Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher, also have their places in the story of Los Gallos.

So it was, then, that when Lois Palken Rudnick had published *Mabel Dodge Luhan: New Woman, New Worlds,* she felt that she still had a story to tell in the biography of the residence itself. Accordingly, she's now produced **Utopian Vistas: The Mabel Dodge Luhan House and the American Counterculture** (University of New Mexico Press, US$35), a fascinating interdisciplinary investigation of the American avant-garde. For after being for so long a second home to the artists and intellectuals who had been displaced by the Great War, it became, under new ownership, a controversial centre for the art that grew up in response to the Cold War and Vietnam. Between 1970 and 1978, the house was owned by Dennis Hopper, the actor, filmmaker, photographer, art collector, and substance-abuser, who first caught a glimpse of the place when making *Easy Rider* with Peter Fonda in 1969.

Hopper, a native of Dodge City, Kansas, was hassled by the establishment in Taos, who thought him a wild man and barbarian. His family was even tormented and teased by the ghost of the original occupant, who had vowed that only the artistically high-minded should ever reside there. Rudnick's chapters on Hopper—his cause and cure, his influence, his circle, his place in pop culture—are the backbone of the book. But she brings the story up to date by telling how ownership then passed to a group of educators, who ran the property as a school for teaching experimental pedagogic techniques. In North American publishing, a biography of a house is a relatively rare thing. *Utopian Vistas* is the most compelling one I've read.

• Another arts patron and professional host who settled in New Mexico—at Sante Fe, a much more cosmopolitan place than Taos—was the poet and translator Witter Bynner (1881–1968). His is one of those names from the 1920s and earlier whose presence in the index is the benchmark of a certain type of book about the period. Like Dodge, he published recollections of his adventures, in this case with D. H. Lawrence, in *Journey with Genius* (1951), and indeed knew Dodge, visiting her at Los Gallos. But they were very different.

Bynner was a Harvard alumnus with inherited capital and was an important early gay poet—more so than he was a poet of the gay sensibility. In politics, he grew into liberalism. Perhaps his most quoted poem is a caustic and lyrical indictment of white American racism. His greatest achievement was a translation, with a Chinese collaborator, Kian Kang-hu, of the central work of Taoism, the *Tao Te Ching* or, as Bynner called it, *The Way of Life According to Laotzu.* He specifically identified the project as an "Americanized version." Appearing as it did during the Second World War, when American interest in China and things Chinese was probably at a peak, the translation became a bestseller and did much to spread the renown of the *Tao,* one of the "three imponderables" of classic Chinese literature. Of course, Bynner was gone by the time of the discovery, in the 1970s, of the so-called *Ma-wang-tui* texts, which revised Taoist scholarship roughly the way the Dead Sea scrolls revised Bible scholarship.

In any event, a good person, Bynner. At his death he left his money for a foundation to assist American poets. One of the foundation's projects in turn was the publication by Knopf, between 1978 and 1981, of a

five-volume edition of his works. The set was under the general editorship of James Kraft, who has now published two new Bynner books with the University of New Mexico Press. *Who Is Witter Bynner?* ($US19.95) is a short but adept biography while *The Selected Witter Bynner* (US$24.95) brings together a selection of poems, plays, translations, and prose. These two are clearly the volumes with which to begin.

• **Drawn from African Dwellings** (Indiana, US$59.95) is a collaboration by Jean-Paul Bourdier, an architect, and Trinh T. Minh-Ha, a social critic, both of the University of California at Berkeley. Their central idea is that the vernacular dwellings of sub-Sahara Africa are of a much more fluid tradition than is supposed. Resourceful in their use of local materials, and tending towards groups or compounds, the builders seem to receive design and construction signals from the combined influences of religion (Islam, Christianity), family and societal relationships, and, of course, the heritage of European colonialism. The photographs and drawings are fascinating.

• As far as I can tell, Virginia Wright's book **Modern Furniture in Canada 1920–1970** (a beautifully designed University of Toronto Press paperback, if somewhat pricey at $39.95), is the first work on the subject. It is thus one of those great natural book-ideas that someone has finally got round to undertaking. The author is careful to show how a distinct Canadian taste, running parallel to, but not always driven by British and American style, evolved through a combination of factors, including local marketing conditions (Eaton's is a big player here) and the innovative use of new materials by commercial designers. This is a fascinating study. After reading it, you'll never look at the Hotel Vancouver or the old Toronto Stock Exchange the same way again.

DOUGLAS FETHERLING
Douglas Fetherling is book review editor of Rotunda.

In the Summer 1998 issue of *Rotunda*...

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For Biting Commentary

A CROCODILE DECORATING A lady's writing desk? This crocodile is found on the drop front of a desk made in the workshop of Servatius Brickardt of Bamberg, Germany, c. 1720. Such wood veneer decoration, known as marquetry, was usually copied from the latest engraved books, often from Paris, and sometimes from books on travel and natural history,

popular subjects in an era of discovery. Typically, images on Baroque furniture were symbolic: therefore, the crocodile may signify the continent of Africa, which was often represented as a black woman with a crocodile at her side. The desk is on display in the Regence Room of the south wing of the Samuel European Galleries, Royal Ontario Museum.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN BOYLE, ROM

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